



Environmental News

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U.S. and Mexican representatives meet in Tucson to report on accomplishments and priorities on environmental issues across the border

TUCSON - At this year's Border 2012 National Coordinators' meeting in Tucson, Ariz., chaired by Jerry Clifford, the U.S. National Coordinator and Maria Teresa Bandala, Mexico's National Coordinator, representatives from U.S. and Mexico federal, state and local officials, and U.S. border tribes identified binational priorities to address human health and environmental concerns across the U.S.-Mexico Border.

The National Coordinators Meeting is presented by the Border 2012: U.S. - Mexico Environmental Program, a 10-year binational cooperative plan that protects public health and the environment along the 2,000-mile border region, home to approximately 12 million inhabitants. The Border 2012 National Coordinators meeting will highlight innovative ways to decrease air, waste, water and soil pollution, and improve environmental health along the U.S. - Mexico border.

"Since the inauguration of the Border 2012 program in April 2003, the U.S. and Mexico have intensified discussions and collaborations to address the array of serious environmental challenges in the border region," said Laura Yoshii, the EPA's deputy regional administrator for the Pacific Southwest region.

"Protecting and improving the environment along the Arizona-Mexico border is one of our top priorities. We are pleased to be working with our Mexican counterparts, as well as the EPA and other states, at this very important meeting to address the many complex environmental issues that Arizona and Mexico face together," said Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens.

In 2004, the EPA awarded approximately \$1.8 million in grants to environmental projects along the U.S. Mexico Border. A Diesel Emission Reductions project for Children's Health is about to be initiated for the Rio Rico School District, located near Nogales, Ariz. The retrofitting of older diesel engine technology in school buses and the use of more readily available ultra low sulfur diesel fuel should significantly reduce particulate matter emissions in the area.

Other funded projects resulted in the removal of 700 tons of hazardous waste from the abandoned Metales y Derivados site in Tijuana, Mexico, and the removal of approximately 271,000 scrap tires from the Juarez, Mexicali, and Tijuana areas for reuse as tire derived fuel.

The community of Quito Vac received funding to improve safe drinking water for their community school by improving its storage and distribution system. Quito Vac is a small indigenous community in the Sonora border region.

Border 2012 program partners also participated in the Binational Border Health Week, which brought together more than 29 federal partner agencies and programs, and 310 community organizations, reaching more than 65,000 people in a week-long event in 14 sister cities along the border.

For more information on the Border 2012: U.S. -Mexico Environmental Program, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/border2012/intro.htm>

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